

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. **10/808,509**

Amendment filed March 6, 2007

Reply to OA dated December 7, 2006

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3 have been further amended to clarify the present invention. Claims 2 and 4 have been cancelled. As now amended, Claim 1 is to a dial plate for use in an instrument panel of a vehicle, that has a segment display area including indexes, the dial plate having laminated patterns of light emitting elements. The laminated patterns are formed on a substrate, composed of glass or a resin, of the dial plate, which substrate does not comprise a printed circuit board by laminating electroluminescent materials through printing. The dial plate includes at least the substrate, a metal electrode printed on the substrate, an emitting layer printed on the metal electrode, and a transparent electrode formed on the emitting layer, and the dial plate has a specific design corresponding to external data. Claim 3 is to a method for forming the dial plate. Such a dial plate and such a method are not taught or suggested in the prior art.

In the Office Action, Claims 1 and 3 were rejected as anticipated under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) in view of Macher et al. (U.S. 6,641,276).

The Office Action states that Macher teaches a dial plate that has a segment display area including indexes, having laminated patterns of light emitting elements (2), the laminated patterns formed on a substrate (3), that is of a glass or a resin (Column 2, lines 36-38), of the dial plate, which substrate does not comprise a printed circuit board, by laminating electroluminescent materials through printing (Column 1, lines 28 - 30), and having a specific design corresponding to external data (Column 1, lines 39 - 43). With respect to Claim 3, the Office Action states that Macher et al. teaches a method for producing a dial plate having a segment display area including indexes, using

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the steps of receiving external data (Column 1, lines 39 - 43), and forming laminated patterns on a substrate of the dial plate by laminating electroluminescent materials (2) through printing (Column 1, lines 19 - 30), where the laminated patterns have a specific design corresponding to the external data (Column 1, lines 39 - 43).

While there are similarities between Macher and the present claimed dial plate and method, there are also important and unobvious distinctions.

The Macher reference refers to a lighting device which is arranged on motor vehicles and/or in interiors of motor vehicles. The reference discusses lighting devices such as general compartment lighting, ambient lighting, vanity mirror lighting, vanity mirror lighting, boot lighting, ashtray lighting and lights in the exterior region of the door. Nowhere is there any teaching or suggestion of a dial plate for use in an instrument panel of a vehicle as called for in the present Claims 1 and 3 . Also the electroluminescent layer assembly of Macher appears to require an insulating or dielectric layer connected to the luminous layer between a first electrode layer and the electroluminescent layer.

Applicants' claims have been amended to require that the laminated electroluminescent materials in the present claimed dial plate include at least the substrate, a metal electrode printed on the substrate, an emitting layer printed on the metal electrode, and a transparent electrode formed on the emitting layer, which specific sequence of materials used for the laminated patterns is not taught or suggested in the Macher reference.

The present invention is specific to a dial plate and is specific to a sequence of materials

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used for the laminated pattern of the dial plate and distinct from and unobvious in view of the cited reference.

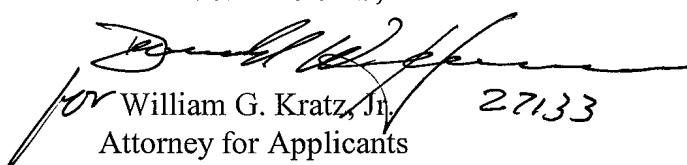
In view of the present amendments to Claims 1 and 3 and the above remarks, Claims 1 and 3 are believed to be patentable and early action towards allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, the applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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